

Testimony of Santia Bennett

Achievement First Parent

Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee

February 21, 2013

Good evening, my name is Santia Bennett. I am the mother of two Achievement First students. My son Julius is a graduate of Amistad High School's first class, and my daughter Jewels attends Amistad middle school. Achievement First schools have adjusted the way I think of our community; I now have faith in the public school system.

You already heard from my son Julius speak with the student panel earlier this evening, so I won't talk too much about him, except to say I never could've imagined that my son would be in his third year of college and on his way to Japan later this spring to study abroad, all because of a public school education.

My twelve year old daughter Jewels struggles with shyness, but she's blossoming. I kept her back in kindergarten because she was immature and needed one extra year to adjust. She started attending Amistad Elementary at age 6, and it is clearer every day that she has benefited immensely from the positive, stimulating environment.

Every student deserves access to OUR wonderful community. I feel so blessed that my children have received a quality education filled with great teachers and challenging school work. I am here tonight on behalf of my scholars to ask you to fund us at the number we need: \$10, 500 this year in order to ensure that these wonderful schools are able to help more families like mine.